

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, June 3, 2009, I missed rollcall No. 295–300. If present, I would have voted “aye” on rollcall votes 295, 297, 298, 299 and 300 and “nay” on rollcall vote 296.

NIKI GARCIA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Niki Garcia who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Niki Garcia is an 8th grader at North Arvada Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Niki Garcia is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Niki Garcia for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her academic career to her future accomplishments.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION IN THE SHANGHAI 2010 EXPO

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a resolution to encourage full United States participation in the Shanghai 2010 Expo. The upcoming 2010 Shanghai Expo—the World’s Fair—includes more than 170 countries, tens of millions of visitors, and thousands of displays of new and emerging technologies and products to spur economic growth and trade. But the United States is in danger of being a no-show. While we have made verbal commitments to participate, the necessary diplomatic and fundraising efforts have lagged, throwing into doubt an important opportunity to demonstrate our global leadership, improve relations with China, and convey to millions of visitors our country’s many technological and cultural achievements.

Madam Speaker, the World’s Fair is a lasting and venerable international institution dating back to the mid-19th century. It is older than the modern-day Olympics, and remains behind only the Olympics and the World Cup in global economic and cultural impact. The United States has a long history of involve-

ment in the World’s Fair, hosting over 20 fairs. Few people realize that these fairs, in addition to showcasing important American technological and cultural achievements, have also left behind lasting reminders of their importance, such as the Seattle Space Needle, the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts, and the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. Unfortunately, in the last decade the United States has declined to participate in many World’s Fairs and other international expositions, depriving the international community of experiencing unique features of American economic and cultural life.

Madam Speaker, the upcoming Shanghai Expo presents a unique and important opportunity for the United States to apply our “soft power” in relations with the international community, especially China. The Chinese government has generously allocated over 60,000 square feet for the American pavilion to anchor one side of the central promenade, sharing that honor only with China. This prominence will afford 170 other nations and millions of citizens the occasion to appreciate the United States’ technological innovations, cultural traditions, our participation in peaceful and beneficial global events, and our national respect for other nations and cultures. As a global leader, the United States has a responsibility to fully participate in this international affair.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

INTRODUCTION OF THE “CREDIT CARD FAIR FEE ACT OF 2009”

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the “Credit Card Fair Fee Act of 2009,” legislation that would help level the playing field for merchants and retailers negotiating with banks for the cost of certain fees, and ultimately reduce the costs of everyday goods for consumers. I am joined by Representative BILL SHUSTER.

Every time a consumer uses a payment card—at the mall, at the grocery store, at a gas station, or on the Internet—the merchant is charged a fee. This fee gets divided up three ways—between the merchant’s bank, the consumer’s bank, and the credit card company. It covers processing fees, fraud protection, billing statements, and other expenses such as system innovations.

As much as 90 percent of this fee comprises a so-called “interchange fee,” which is the payment made by the merchant’s bank to the consumer’s bank. The percentage is set by the credit card companies, generally Visa or MasterCard, and averages 1.75 percent of the total purchase. In 2008, interchange fees from these two companies totaled approximately \$48 billion, an increase of 189 percent since 2001. These fees are ultimately passed on to all consumers in the form of higher prices for goods and services, whether the consumers purchase these items by credit card, check or cash. The average U.S. family paid an estimated \$427 in interchange fees in 2008, nearly triple the amount in 2001.

These interchange fees are set by the credit card companies. The two largest, Visa and

MasterCard, control over 73 percent of the volume of transactions on general purpose cards in the United States and approximately 90 percent of the cards issued. Banks that are members of the Visa association are often also members of the MasterCard association.

Merchants are forced to deal within this system because it is simply not an option to refuse to accept Visa or MasterCard from their customers. They are presented with take-it-or-leave-it options and are not part of the process by which the fees are set.

The bill creates a limited antitrust immunity for negotiating voluntary agreements. This legislation is intended to give merchants a seat at the table in the determination of these fees. It is not an attempt at regulating the industry and does not mandate any particular outcome. This legislation simply enhances competition by allowing merchants to negotiate with the dominant banks for the terms and rates of the fees.

It is time to level the playing field for merchants and consumers. I am hopeful that Congress can move to enact this worthwhile and timely legislation.

CARLOS GONZALES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Carlos Gonzales who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Carlos Gonzales is an 8th grader at Drake Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Carlos Gonzales is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Carlos Gonzales for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication he has shown in his academic career to his future accomplishments.

HONORING THE EFFORTS OF THE FIRE MARSHAL JOHN J. HENRY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Fire Marshal John J. “Jody” Henry for his tireless and persistent efforts to solve the arson case of the old Cooke County Courthouse. His determination over past three years resulted in the conviction of Timothy York.

In his 30 years of service as a firefighter, this incident was one of the most important to Fire Marshal Henry. When the Cooke County Courthouse was attacked on February 21, 2006, Henry began combining efforts with